

Dear Committee Members:

I'm write to request from you increase bike and pedestrian funding. This is an issue dear to my heart and important to my family's well-being.

When my wife and I looked for a place to live, we looked to raise a family in a community that was walkable and bikable. The ability to get around by foot and by bike is important to us because, we believe, it allows us to spend that time traveling in a more quality way with our children than if we had to travel by car. Also, living in a neighborhood with activity on the street helps us to get to know our neighbors better and to foster a sense of community among our different neighbors. This is key to having a life of vibrancy in our town.

We live in New Haven and we love the city, in part, because it is naturally walkable and bikable. However, it could be better. The municipal government in New Haven has worked very hard to provide increased bicycle infrastructure, but big gaps still exist. Connecting bike paths/lanes through the city is key to making biking safer, to reducing pollutants, and to increasing public health.

I would be remiss if I didn't tell you that on two occasions a car struck my bike. One time, I was carrying my three-year-old in a bike seat when an impatient driver, trying to pass around another driver, swerved around the car he was behind and knocked into my handlebars. I was able to stabilize the bike and nothing bad happened. But I was lucky. Crazy drivers threaten lives. If we had our own bike lane, we would've been placed in a safer area than being mixed in with the traffic in general. On another occasion I was waiting at a red light when an elderly woman ran right into the back of my bike and crushed my back tire. Again, nothing serious occurred and her insurance paid for the repairs of my bike, however it could have been worse. If there were a way to provide space for bikes separate and apart from space for cars, this would have protected me from being hit by this lady.

Most importantly, I want to, over the years, provide independence for my children. I want to let them walk around their own town and let them bike around their hometown. However, drivers that routinely speed, disregard the rights of pedestrians and bikers, and run red lights, threaten the lives everyone and make me fearful for my children's safety. Studies have shown that narrowing roads, increasing pedestrian activity, increasing bike activity, and adding trees, all have the effect of slowing the drivers down. This, in turn, has the effect of making our cities safer.

Public Safety is about much more than a police presence and fighting crime. If your loved one is killed by bullet or buy a car, he or she is still dead. By increasing funding for bike and pedestrian facilities in our city, you will make our cities more livable, more enjoyable, more attractive to young transplants who are looking for communities that they can walk and bike in, and, most importantly, you will make them safer- safer for you, safer for me, and safer for all our children.

Thank you.

All the best,
Liam Brennan